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COMPLIMENTS OF

MACLEOD STEWART

REPRINT OF THE

"GREAT" SPEECH

DELIVERED BY THE LATE

Marquis of Dufferin and Ava

(GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA)

AT A

Farewell Dejeuner in the City Hall

WINNIPEG

IN SEPTEMBER, 1877

1898.?

SPEECH

Delivered by the late

MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA

AT WINNIPEG, IN SEPTEMBER, 1877

"MR. MAYOR, YOUR HONOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—In rising to express my acknowledgments to the citizens of Winnipeg for thus crowning the friendly reception I have received throughout the length and breadth of Manitoba by so noble an entertainment, I am painfully oppressed by the consideration of the many respects in which my thanks are due to you, and to so many other persons in the Province. (Applause.) From our first landing on your quays until the present moment my progress through the country has been one continual delight (loud applause), nor has the slightest hitch or incongruous incident marred the satisfaction of my visit. I have to thank you for the hospitalities I have enjoyed at the hands of your individual citizens, as well as of a multitude of independent communities,—for the tasteful and ingenious decorations which adorned my route,—for the quarter of a mile of evenly-yoked oxen that drew our triumphal car,—for the universal proofs of your loyalty to the Throne and the Mother Country, and for your personal good will towards Her Majesty's representative. Above all I have to thank you for the evidences produced on either hand along our march of your prosperous condition, of your perfect contentment, of your confidence in your future fortunes—for I need not tell you that to any one in my situation, smiling cornfields, cozy homesteads, the joyful faces of prosperous men and women, and the laughter of healthy children, are the best of all triumphal adornments. (Applause.) But there are other things for which I ought to be obliged to you, and first for the beautiful weather you have taken the precaution to provide us with during some six weeks of perpetual camping out (laughter), for which attention I have received Lady Dufferin's especial orders to render you her personal thanks —an attention which the unusual phenomenon of a casual waterspout enabled us only the better to appreciate; and, lastly, though certainly not least, for not having generated amongst you that fearful entity, "A Pacific Railway question"—at all events not in those dire and tragic proportions in which I have encountered it elsewhere. (Great laughter.) Of course I know a certain phase of the railway question is agitating even this community, but it has assumed the mild character of a domestic, rather than of an inter-Provincial controversy. Two distinguished members, moreover, of my Government, have been lately amongst you, and have doubtless acquainted themselves with your views and wishes. It is not necessary, therefore, that I should mar the hilarious

character of the present festival by any untimely allusions to so grave a matter. Well, then, ladies and gentlemen, what am I to say and do to you in return for all the pleasure and satisfaction I have received at your hands? I fear there is very little that I can say and scarcely anything that I can do commensurate with my obligations. Stay—there is one thing at all events I think I have already done, for which I am entitled to claim your thanks. You are doubtless aware that a great political controversy has for some time raged between the two great parties of the State as to which of them is responsible for the visitation of that terror of two continents—the Colorado bug. (Great laughter.) The one side is disposed to assert that if their opponents had never acceded to power the Colorado bug would never have come to Canada. (Renewed laughter.) I have reason to believe, however, though I know not whether any substantial evidence has been adduced in support of their assertion (laughter), that my Government deny and repudiate having had any sort of concert or understanding with that irrepressible invader. (Roars of laughter.) It would be highly unconstitutional for me, who am bound to hold a perfectly impartial balance between the contending parties of the State, to pronounce an opinion upon this momentous question. (Renewed laughter.) But however disputable a point may be the prime and original authorship of the Colorado bug, there is one fact no one will question, namely, that to the presence of the Governor-General in Manitoba is to be attributed the sudden, total, otherwise unaccountable, and, I trust, permanent disappearance, not only from this Province, but from the whole North-west, of the infamous and unmentionable "Hopper" (loud laughter) whose annual visitations for the last seventeen years have proved so distressing to the agricultural interests of the entire region. But apart from being the fortunate instrument of conferring this benefit upon you (laughter), I fear the only further return in my power is to assure you of my great sympathy with you in your endeavors to do justice to the material advantages with which your Province has been so richly endowed by the hands of Providence. From its geographical position, and its peculiar characteristics, Manitoba may be regarded as the keystone of that mighty arch of sister Provinces which spans the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific. (Great applause.) It was here that Canada, emerging from her woods and forests, first gazed upon her rolling prairies and unexplored North-west, and learnt, as by an unexpected revelation, that her historical territories of the Canadas, her eastern seaboards of New Brunswick, Labrador and Nova Scotia, her Laurentian lakes and valleys, corn lands and pastures, though themselves more extensive than half a dozen European kingdoms (applause), were but the vestibules and ante-chambers to that till then undreamt of Dominion, whose illimitable dimensions alike confound the arithmetic of the surveyor and the verification of the explorer. (Tremendous applause.) It was hence that counting her past achievements as but the preface and prelude to her future exertions and expanding destinies, she took a fresh departure, received the afflatus of a more Imperial inspiration, and felt herself no longer a mere settler along the banks of a single river, but the owner of half a continent, and in the amplitude of her possession, in the wealth of her resources, in the sinews of her material might, the peer of any power on the earth. (Loud applause.) In a recent remarkably witty speech the Marquis of Salisbury alluded to the geographical misconceptions often engendered by the smallness of the maps upon which the figure of the world is depicted. To this cause is probably to be attributed the inadequate idea, entertained by the best educated persons, of the extent of Her Majesty's North American possessions. Perhaps the best way of correcting such a universal misapprehension would be by a summary of the rivers which flow through them, for we know that as a poor man cannot afford to live in a big house, so a small country cannot support a big

vantageous element in the economical structure of the colony. (Applause.) There is no doubt that a great deal of the good feeling thus subsisting between the redmen and ourselves is due to the influence and interposition of that invaluable class of men, the half-breed settlers and pioneers of Manitoba (loud applause), who, combining as they do, the hardihood, the endurance, and love of enterprise generated by the strain of Indian blood within their veins, with the civilization, the instruction, and the intellectual power derived from their fathers, have preached the gospel of peace and good will and mutual respect, with equally beneficent results to the Indian chieftain in his lodge and the British settler in his shanty. (Great applause.) They have been the ambassadors between the East and the West, the interpreters of civilization and its exigencies to the dwellers on the prairie, as well as the exponents to the white man of the consideration justly due to the susceptibilities, the sensitive self-respect, the prejudices, the innate craving for justice of the Indian race. (Applause.) In fact, they have done for the colony what otherwise would have been left unaccomplished, and have introduced between the white population and the red man a traditional feeling of amity and friendship, which, but for them, it might have been impossible to establish. (Cheers.) Nor can I pass by the humane, kindly and considerate attention which has ever distinguished the Hudson Bay Company in its dealings with the native population. (Applause.) But, though giving due credit to these influences amongst the causes which are conducing to produce and preserve this fortunate result, the place of honor must be adjudged to that honorable and generous policy which has been pursued by successive Governments of Canada towards the Indian, and which at this moment is being superintended and carried out with so much tact, discretion and ability by your present Lieutenant-Governor (applause), under which the extinction of the Indian title upon liberal terms has invariably been recognized as a necessary preliminary to the occupation of a single square yard of native territory. (Cheering.) But our Indian friends and neighbors are by no means the only alien communities in Manitoba which demand the solicitude of the Government and excite our sympathies and curiosity. In close proximity to Winnipeg are two other communities, the Mennonites and Icelanders, starting from opposite ends of Europe, without either consort or communication, have sought fresh homes within our territory, the one of Russian extraction, though of German race, moved by a desire to escape from the obligations of a law which was repulsive to their conscience, the other bred amid the snows and ashes of an Arctic volcano, by the hope of bettering their material condition. (Applause.) Although I have witnessed many sights to cause me pleasure during my various progresses through the Dominion, seldom have I beheld any spectacle more pregnant with prophecy, more fraught with promise of a successful future than the Mennonite Settlement. (Applause.) When I visited these interesting people they had only been two years in the Province, and yet in a long ride I took across many miles of prairie, which but yesterday was absolutely bare, desolate and untenanted, the home of the wolf, the badger and the eagle, I passed village after village, homestead after homestead, furnished forth with all the conveniences and incidents of European comfort, and a scientific agriculture, while on either side the road cornfields already ripe for harvest, and pastures populous with herds of cattle, stretched away to the horizon. (Great applause.) Even on this continent—the peculiar theatre of rapid change and progress—there has nowhere, I imagine, taken place so marvellous a transformation (cheers), and yet when in your name, and in the name of the Queen of England, I bade these people welcome to their new homes, it was not the improvement in their material fortunes that preoccupied my thoughts. Glad as I was to have the power of applotting them so ample a portion of our teeming soil—a soil which seems to

blossom at a touch (cheering), and which they were cultivating to such manifest advantage, I felt infinitely prouder in being able to throw over them the ægis of the British Constitution (loud cheering), and in bidding them freely share with us our unrivalled political institutions, our untrammelled personal liberty. (Great cheering.) We ourselves are so accustomed to breathe the atmosphere of freedom that it scarcely occurs to us to consider and appreciate our advantages in this respect. It is only when we are reminded by such incidents as that to which I refer, the small extent of the world's surface over which the principles of Parliamentary Government can be said to work smoothly and harmoniously, that we are led to consider the exceptional happiness of our position. (Applause.) Nor was my visit to the Icelandic community less satisfactory than that to our Mennonite fellow-subject. From accidental circumstances I have been long since led to take an interest in the history and literature of the Scandinavian race, and the kindness I once received at the hands of the Icelandic people in their own island naturally induced me to take a deep interest in the welfare of this new emigration. (Applause.) When we take into account the secluded position of the Icelandic nation for the last thousand years, the unfavorable conditions of their climatic and geographical situation, it would be unreasonable to expect that a colony from thence should exhibit the same aptitudes for agricultural enterprise and settlement as would be possessed by a people fresh from intimate contact with the higher civilization of Europe. In Iceland there are neither trees, nor cornfields, nor highways. You cannot, therefore, expect an Icelander to exhibit an inspired proficiency in felling trees, ploughing lands, or making roads, yet unfortunately these are the three accomplishments most necessary to a colonist in Canada. But though starting at a disadvantage in these respects, you must not underrate the capacity of your new fellow-countrymen. They are endowed with a great deal of intellectual ability and a quick intelligence. They are well educated. I scarcely entered a hovel at Gimli which did not possess a library. They are well conducted, religious and peaceable. Above all they are docile and anxious to learn. (Applause.) Nor considering the difficulty which prevails in this country in procuring women servants, will the accession of some hundreds of bright, good-humored, though perhaps inexperienced, yet willing Icelandic girls, anxious for employment, be found a disadvantage by the resident ladies of the country. Should the dispersion of these young people lead in course of time to the formation of more intimate and tenderer ties than those of mere neighborhood between the Canadian population and the Icelandic colony, I am safe in predicting that it will not prove a matter of regret on the one side or the other. (Applause.) And, gentlemen, in reference to this point I cannot help remarking with satisfaction on the extent to which a community of interests, the sense of being engaged in a common undertaking, the obvious degree in which the prosperity of any one man is a gain to his neighbors, has amalgamated the various sections of the population of this Province, originally so diverse in race, origin and religion, into a patriotic, closely welded and united whole. (Applause.) In no part of Canada have I found a better feeling prevailing between all classes and sections of the community. (Cheers.) It is in a great measure owing to this widespread sentiment of brotherhood that on a recent occasion great troubles have been averted, while at the present moment it is finding its crowning and most triumphant expression in the establishment of a University under conditions which have been declared impossible of application in any other Province of Canada—I may say in any other country in the world (great cheering); for nowhere else, either in Europe or on this continent, as far as I am aware, have the Bishops and heads of the various religious communities into which the Christian world is unhappily divided, combined to erect an Alma Mater to which all the denominational colleges of the Province are to

river. Now, to an Englishman or a Frenchman, the Severn or the Thames, the Seine or the Rhone, would appear considerable streams, but in the Ottawa, a mere affluent of the St. Lawrence, an affluent moreover which reaches the parent stream six hundred miles from its mouth, we have a river nearly five hundred and fifty miles long, and three or four times as big as any of them. (Applause.) But even after having ascended the St. Lawrence itself to Lake Ontario, and pursued it across Lake Huron, St. Clair and Lake Superior to Thunder Bay, a distance of one thousand five hundred miles, where are we? In the estimation of the person who has made the journey, at the end of all things (great laughter); but to us, who know better, scarcely at the commencement of the great fluvial systems of the Dominion; for, from that spot, that is to say, from Thunder Bay, we are able at once to ship our astonished traveller on to the Kaministiquia, a river of some hundred miles long. Thence, almost in a straight line, we launch him on to Lake Shebandowan and Rainy Lake and River—a magnificent stream three hundred yards broad and a couple of hundred miles long, down whose tranquil bosom he floats into the Lake of the Woods, where he finds himself on a sheet of water which, though diminutive as compared with the inland seas he has left behind him, will probably be found sufficiently extensive to render him fearfully seasick during his passage across it. (Laughter.) For the last eighty miles of his voyage, however, he will be consoled by sailing through a succession of land-locked channels, the beauty of whose scenery, while it resembles, certainly excels the far-famed Thousand Islands of the St. Lawrence. (Loud cheering.) From this lacustrine paradise of sylvan beauty we are able at once to transfer our friend to the Winnipeg, a river whose existence in the very heart and centre of the continent is in itself one of Nature's most delightful miracles, so beautiful and varied are its rocky banks, its tufted islands, so broad, so deep, so fervid is the volume of its waters, the extent of their lake-like expansions, and the tremendous power of their rapids. (Tremendous applause.) At last let us suppose we have landed our traveller at the town of Winnipeg, the half-way house of the continent, the capital of the Prairie Province, and, I trust, the future 'umbilicus' of the Dominion. (Great cheering.) Having had so much of water, having now reached the home of the buffalo, like the extenuated Falstaff, he naturally 'babbles of green fields' (laughter and applause), and careers in imagination over the primeval grasses of the prairie. Not at all. Escorted by Mr. Mayor and the Town Council we take him down to your quay and ask him which he will ascend first—the Red River or the Assiniboine, two streams, the one five hundred miles long, the other four hundred and eighty, which so happily mingle their waters within your city limits. (Applause.) After having given him a preliminary canter up these respective rivers, we take him off to Lake Winnipeg, an inland sea three hundred miles long and upwards of sixty broad, during the navigation of which for many a weary hour he will find himself out of sight of land, and probably a good deal more indisposed than ever he was on the Lake of the Woods, or even the Atlantic. (Laughter.) At the north-west angle of Lake Winnipeg he hits upon the mouth of the Saskatchewan, the gateway to the North-west, and the starting point to another one thousand five hundred miles of navigable water, flowing nearly due east and west between its alluvial banks. Having now reached the foot of the Rocky Mountains our 'ancient mariner' (laughter), for by this time he will be quite entitled to such an appellation, knowing that water cannot run up hill, feels certain his acquatic experiences are concluded. (Laughter and applause.) He was never more mistaken. (Laughter.) We immediately launch him upon the Arthabaska and Mackenzie rivers, and start him on a longer trip than any he has yet undertaken (laughter)—the navigation of the Mackenzie River alone exceeding two thousand five hundred miles. If he survives this last

experience we wind up his peregrinations by a concluding voyage of one thousand four hundred miles down the Fraser River, or, if he prefers it, the Thompson River to Victoria, in Vancouver, whence, having previously provided him with a first-class return ticket for that purpose, he will probably prefer going home via the Canadian Pacific. (Roars of laughter.) Now, in this enumeration, those who are acquainted with the country are aware that, for the sake of brevity, I have omitted thousands of miles of other lakes and rivers, which water various regions of the North-west, the Qu'Appelle River, the Belly River, Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipegosis, Shoal Lake, etc., along whose interminable banks and shores I might have dragged and finally exterminated our way-worn guest (laughter), but the sketch I have given is more than sufficient for my purpose, and when it is further remembered that the most of these streams flow for their entire length through alluvial plains of the richest description (applause), where year after year wheat can be raised without manure, or any sensible diminution in its yield (hear, hear), and where the soil everywhere presents the appearance of a highly-cultivated suburban kitchen garden in England, enough has been said to display the agricultural riches of the territories I have referred to (great applause) and the capabilities they possess of affording happy and prosperous homes to millions of the human race. (Long-continued applause.) But in contemplating the vistas thus opened to our imagination, we must not forget that there ensues a corresponding expansion of our obligations. For instance, unless great care is taken, we shall find, as we move westwards, that the exigencies of civilization may clash injuriously with the prejudices and traditional habits of our Indian fellow-subjects. As long as Canada was in the woods the Indian problem was comparatively easy, the progress of settlement was slow enough to give ample time and opportunity for arriving at an amicable and mutually convenient arrangement with each tribe, with whom we successively came into contact; but once out upon the plains, colonization will advance with far more rapid and ungovernable strides, and it cannot fail eventually to interfere with the by no means inexhaustible supply of buffalo upon which so many of the Indian tribes are now dependent. Against this contingency it will be our most urgent and imperative duty to take timely precautions by enabling the red man, not by any undue pressure, or hasty, or ill-considered interference, but by precept, example and suasion, by gifts of cattle and other encouragements, to exchange the precarious life of a hunter for that of a pastoral and eventually that of an agricultural people. (Applause.) Happily in no part of Her Majesty's Dominions are the relations existing between the white settler and the original natives and masters of the land so well understood or so generously and humanly interpreted as in Canada, and, as a consequence, instead of being a cause of anxiety and disturbance, the Indian tribes of the Dominion are regarded as a valuable adjunct to our strength and industry. (Hear, hear, and applause.) Wherever I have gone in the Province, and since I have been here I have travelled nearly a thousand miles within your borders, I have found the Indians upon their several reserves, pretermitting a few petty grievances of a local character they thought themselves justified in preferring, contented and satisfied, upon the most friendly terms with their white neighbors, and implicitly confiding in the good faith and paternal solicitude of the Government. (Applause.) In some districts I have learnt with pleasure that the Sioux, who a few years since entered our territory under such sinister circumstances—I do not of course refer to the recent visit of Sitting Bull and his people, who, however, I believe, are remaining perfectly quiet—are not only peaceable and well-behaved, but have turned into useful and hardworking laborers and harvestmen, while in the most distant settlements, the less domesticated bands of natives, whether as hunters, voyageurs, guides, or purveyors of our furs and game, prove an appreciably ad-

be affiliated, and whose statutes and degrees are to be regulated and dispensed under the joint auspices of a governing body in which all the churches of the land will be represented. (Great applause.) An achievement of this kind speaks volumes in favor of the wisdom, liberality and the Christian charity of those devoted men by whom in this distant land the consciences of the population are led and enlightened, and long may they be spared to see the effects of their exertions and magnanimous sacrifices in the good conduct and grateful devotion of their respective flocks. (Cheers.) Nor, I am happy to think, is this good fellowship upon which I have so much cause to congratulate you confined either within the limits of the Province, or even within those of the Dominion. Nothing struck me more on my way through St. Paul, in the United States, than the sympathetic manner in which the inhabitants of that flourishing city alluded to the progress and prospects of Canada and the North-west (loud applause), and on arriving here I was equally struck by finding even a more exuberant counterpart of those friendly sentiments. (Great applause.) The reason is not far to seek. Quite independently of the genial intercourse promoted by neighborhood and the intergrowth of commercial relations, a bond of sympathy between the two Provinces is created by the consciousness that they are both engaged in an enterprise of world-wide importance; that they are both organized corps in the ranks of humanity, and the wings of a great army marching in line on a level front; that they are both engaged in advancing the standards of civilization westwards, and that for many a year to come they will be associated in the task of converting the breadths of prairie that stretch between them and the setting sun into one vast paradise of international peace, of domestic happiness and material plenty. (Great cheering.) Between two communities thus occupied it is impossible but that amity and loving kindness should be begotten. (Applause.) But, perhaps it will be asked, how can I, who am the natural and official guardian of Canada's virtue, mark with satisfaction such dangerously sentimental proclivities towards her seductive neighbor. I will reply by appealing to those experienced matrons and chaperones I see around me. They will tell you that when a young lady expresses her frank admiration of a man, when she welcomes his approach with unconstrained pleasure, crosses the room to sit beside him, presses him to join her picnic, praises him to her friends, there is not the slightest fear of her affections having been surreptitiously entrapped by the gay deceiver. (Loud laughter.) On the contrary, it is when she can be scarcely brought to mention his name (great laughter), when she avoids his society, when she alludes to him with malice and disparagement, that real danger is to be apprehended. (Renewed laugher.) No, no! Canada both loves and admires the United States, but it is with the friendly, frank affection which a heart-whole, stately maiden feels for some big, boisterous, hobbledehoy of a cousin, fresh from school and elate with animal spirits and good nature. She knows he is stronger and more muscular than herself, has lots of pocket-money (laughter), can smoke cigars, and 'loaf around' in public places in an ostentatious manner forbidden to the decorum of her own situation. (Uproarious laughter.) She admires him for his bigness, strength, and prosperity. She likes to hear of his punching the heads of other boys. (Laughter.) She anticipates and will be proud of his future success in life, and both likes him and laughs at him for his affectionate, loyal, though somewhat patronizing friendship for herself. (Great laughter.) But of no nearer connection does she dream, nor does his bulky image for a moment disturb her virginal meditations. (Laughter.) In a world apart, secluded from all extraneous influences, nestling at the feet of her majestic mother, Canada dreams her dream, and forbodes her destiny—a dream of ever-broadening harvests, multiplying towns and villages, and expanding pastures, of constitutional self-government, and a confederated Empire; of page

after page of honorable history, added as her contribution to the annals of the Mother Country and to the glories of the British race; of a perpetuation for all time upon this continent of that temperate and well-balanced system of government, which combines in one mighty whole, as the eternal possession of all Englishmen, the brilliant history and traditions of the past, with the freest and most untrammelled liberty of action in the future. (Tremendous cheering.) Ladies and gentlemen, I have now done. I have to thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me, and once again for the many kindnesses you have done Lady Dufferin and myself during our stay amongst you. Most heartily do I congratulate you upon all that you are doing, and upon the glorious prospect of prosperity which is opening out on every side of you. (Applause.) Though elsewhere in the Dominion stagnation of trade and commerce has checked for a year or two the general advance of Canada, here at least you have escaped the effects of such sinister incidents, for your welfare being based upon the most solid of all foundations, the cultivation of the soil, you are in a position to pursue the even tenor of your way untroubled by those alternations of fortune which disturb the world of trade and manufacture. You have been blessed with an abundant harvest, and soon I trust will a railway come to carry to those who need it the surplus of your produce, now—as my eyes have witnessed—imprisoned in your storehouses for want of the means of transport. (Cheers.) May the expanding finances of the country soon place the Government in a position to gratify your just and natural expectations." (Great cheering.)